



KANSAS BOARD OF REGENTS

Senate Committee on Education SB 199, Proponent February 13, 2019

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Good afternoon Chair Baumgardner and members of the Committee. This testimony is submitted on behalf of the Kansas Board of Regents and in support of SB 199, AO-K to Work.

SB 199 would provide an alternate path for adults to gain a Kansas high school equivalency credential, based on the following criteria:

- Successful completion of an AO-K career pathway, approved by the Kansas Board of Regents;
- Receipt of an industry-recognized credential appropriate to the completed pathway;
- Earning a career readiness assessment at a level approved by the Kansas Board of Regents; and
- Satisfaction of any other requirements deemed necessary by the Kansas Board of Regents.

“Accelerating Opportunity: Kansas” is a career pathways program model that assists students in obtaining a high school equivalency credential, preparing them to succeed in transferable college-level courses and earning an industry recognized credential. Career pathways must include a minimum of 12 college credit hours, 25 percent of which must include basic skills instruction aligned with the career pathway content. Tuition for AO:K students is currently supported by the Kansas Legislature in the Board of Regents’ budget and we do not anticipate requiring additional appropriations for the program as a result of this bill. It is difficult to predict how many additional students might participate in the program as a result of this bill.

As a part of the Accelerating Opportunity: Kansas model, students are provided a host of support services including career navigation, advising, academic support, etc. To

maintain tuition benefits, students must be co-enrolled in a Kansas adult education program receiving academic instruction and support.

There are currently more than 160,000 Kansas adults who lack a high school diploma. The AO-K to Work Act would combine the components of the successful AO-K program with additional requirements to allow adults to demonstrate high school equivalency without the need to take a high stakes high school equivalency exam.

With the addition of an appropriate career readiness credential and other academic criteria established by the Kansas Board of Regents, we can ensure that qualified adults are provided a more direct path to high school equivalency and employment.

Thank you for the opportunity to appear before you on this issue.